



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SITE REMEDIATION AND WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

401 East State Street

P.O. Box 420, Mail Code 401-05F

Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0420

Tel. (609) 633-1455

www.nj.gov/dep

PHILIP D. MURPHY

Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER

Lt. Governor

SHAWN M. LATOURETTE

Acting Commissioner

June 4, 2021

Sam Abdellatif
Land and Redevelopment Programs Branch
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2
290 Broadway, 25th. Floor
New York, NY 10007-1866

RE: Amerada Hess Corp- Former Port Reading Refinery
EPA ID No. NJD045445483
750 Cliff Road
Woodbridge Twp, Middlesex County
PI#: 006148

Comment Letter: Ecological Evaluation

Dear Mr. Abdellatif:

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (Department) has completed a review of the Ecological Evaluation dated November 9, 2015. The document was submitted pursuant to the Site Remediation Reform Act (N.J.S.A. 58:10C-1 et seq.), the Administrative Requirements for the Remediation of Contaminated Sites (N.J.A.C. 7:26C), and the NJDEP Technical Requirements for Site Remediation at N.J.A.C. 7:26E.

The Department acknowledges that the Ecological Evaluation was submitted during the Site Investigation phase. The Department requests that all future Ecological Evaluations and, if necessary, Ecological Risk Assessments be submitted for each Area of Concern (AOC) grouping. **Therefore, the following comments are to be addressed in future revised Ecological Evaluations and, if necessary, Ecological Risk Assessments to be submitted in Remedial Investigation Reports for each Area of Concern (AOC) grouping, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:26E-4.8.**

The Department has the following comments:

1. ***Table 2-2 – Wildlife Species Encountered or Suspected*** – Please include in Table 2-2 the following species, which were retrieved from the Landscape Project layer: Cattle Egret,

Black-crowned Night-heron, Little Blue Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-heron, Glossy Ibis, Snowy Egret and Peregrine Falcon.

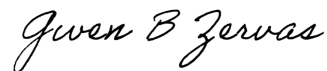
2. **Table 2-3 – Fishes of the Arthur Kill-** Please include the Shortnose Sturgeon in the table.
3. **Section 3.0 - Contaminants of Potential Ecological Concern-** Summary statistic tables are useful for an overall review of the site. It is important to include, in a tabular format, the sample locations map and the individual data compared to the corresponding ecological screening criteria (ESC). The tables and sample locations provide additional information such as the extent of the contamination, potential hot spots and specific Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resources (ESNRs) that will need to be investigated or are potentially impacted. The Ecological Evaluation Technical Guidance (EETG) Section 5.2.2 states “Compare all surface water, sediment, soil, and groundwater (from monitoring wells or piezometers proximal to ESNRs) data collected from contaminant migration pathways and ESNRs to ESCs and standards in the most recent version of the NJDEP Ecological Screening Criteria Table”.
4. **Section 4.1- 4.4 Surface Waters**—Please include the Arthur Kill Tributary that is located at Block: 1095.01 Lot: 6.
5. **Section 4.23 - Habitat for Federal and State Endangered or Threatened Plant & Animal Species** –In each of the AOC groupings specific ecological evaluations, please submit the Natural Heritage Data Search Letter from the Office of Natural Lands Management. Please note, the Landscape Project identified the Arthur Kill, the Arthur Kill tributary and Smith Creek as migratory corridor and foraging habitat for several endangered or threatened animal species (e.g.: Shortnose sturgeon, Black crowned Night-heron, and Peregrine falcon)
6. **Section 5.0 Contaminant Migration Pathways to ESNR** - This Ecological Evaluation lacks a comprehensive evaluation of historical and current contaminant migration pathways from specific petroleum and chemical contaminant source areas to associated ESNRs, required pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:26E-3.6 and 4.8 and in accordance with the EETG section 5.2.3 and the administrative guidance *Investigating Impacts from Contaminated Sites to a Surface Water Body*, November 2015. Rather than revise the EE, **the Department recommends that the Ecological Remedial Investigations (Ecological RIs) that will be conducted for each AOC group address this issue retroactively and develop an Ecological Conceptual Site Model (CSM) that thoroughly describes current and historic sources, contaminant migration pathways, and receptors.** Consideration should be given to the historical management practices for refinery waste/wastewater, storm water, and direct discharges (e.g., from spills, leaks, fuel transfers, tanker operations) for each AOC group throughout its complete operating history. A figure for each AOC group must depict and label all historic and current contaminant source areas, waste management features (e.g., oil/water separators, detention/aeration basins, etc.), and migration pathways, including drainage systems (ditches, channels, piping, pipe bedding), outfalls, and areas of surface runoff. The discharge of contaminated groundwater to surface water must be addressed. Sampling in contaminant migration pathways and ESNRs must be conducted, as appropriate, for the Ecological RI for each AOC group to fully determine ecological impacts.

7. **Section 5.2 - Potential Migration Pathways to ENSRs** states “Another important consideration is the pH of the surface water recorded during sampling by Earth Systems. If the pH is near neutral, the metals would not enter into solution as rapidly to potentially be leached toward the water bodies.” Please note, that this is a general statement. The presence of elevated metal levels will still need to be fully delineated in all media. The pH levels do not preclude Hess from sampling and providing analytical data from all potentially impacted media.

Nothing in this correspondence affects Hess’ potential liability and obligations to the State Trustee, the Department, or its Commissioner regarding natural resource injuries, restoration, or damages.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, contact Julia Galayda at Julia.Galayda@dep.nj.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gwen B Zervas".

Gwen B. Zervas, P.E.
Section Chief

Cc: Julia Galayda, Case Manager
John Virgie, LSRP, Earth Systems
Ann Charles, BEERA
Jill Monroe, BGWPA
Iman Olguin-Lira, ETRA
Nancy Hamill, ETRA